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A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D

On the D E A T H of
Mr. Edward Bulkely,

I N T H E
Church of *St. Mary*, in
Fort St. George.

O N
S U N D A Y, *August 15.* M D C C X I V.

J O B III. 21, 22.

-----*Which long for Death, and it cometh not ; and
dig for it, more than for hid Treasures :
Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they
can find the Grave.*

By W I L L I A M S T E V E N S O N, M. A.

L O N D O N :

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J O B III. 21, 22.

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Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad,
when they can find the Grave.



W H I L E Job's Afflictions were
tolerable, he bore them with
the greatest Temper, Humi-
lity, and Resignation : For,
being, in one Day, depri-
ved of his Children, his Servants, and his
Estate ; tho' he gave a little way to Na-
tural Affection, and decent Grief, he soon
check'd the tender Emotions of his Soul ;
and by the Force of very proper and pi-
ous Reflections, raised in himself all the
becoming Sentiments of Submission and
Gratitude : He worshipped God, and said, Job I 21.
*Naked came I out of my Mother's womb ;
and naked shall I return thither : The Lord*

*gave ; and the Lord hath taken away
Blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

Ch. 2. 9. NAY, when amidst all his other Affli-
v. 10. ctions, his Grief was heighten'd by noi-
som Boils, and painful Sores, over all his
Body ; he was so far from hearkning to
the wicked Advice of his foolish Wife,
that he *held fast his Integrity*, and said,
*What ? Shall we receive Good at the hand of
God ; and shall we not receive Evil ?*

HITHERTO *Job* acted the Part of a
Perfect, and an Upright Man ; One that
feared God, and eschewed evil : Which is
the Character the Almighty himself gave
him on this Occasion.

BUT the Good Man's Conduct was not
all of a Piece ; for his Pain, at length,
got the better of his Philosophy : So that
after seven Days Silence, in the Height of
his Grief and Anguish, (which, we may
well suppose, left but little Room for wise
Reflections ;) he curseth the Day of his
Birth ; and expostulates upon that Sub-
ject, in such Terms, as discover an ex-
cessive Sorrow, and insupportable Pain.

IN such an Extremity, 'tis no wonder
that his Patience was quite tired out ; and
that

that his Expressions are vehement, and un-
guarded. For, what cou'd be expected
from a Man in Misery? He knew not the
Cause, (and he saw not the End) of it:
Only he was sure he had a good Consci-
ence; and that *Death* was more desirable
than Pain. *There (says he) the wicked cease* Chap. 3
from troubling: And there the weary be at 17.
Rest: They hear not the Voice of the Oppres-
sor: The Small and Great are there: And the
Servant is free from his Master.

HERE he seems to consider Death as
the End of his Torment; and on that Ac-
count prefers it to a Life of Woe. But
when he further reflects on his Dissolution,
as the Door to Eternal Bliss; not only as
a State of Ease and Rest, but an Entrance
into a happy Immortality, he then wishes
for it with Impatience; he longs for his
new kind of Being; and lessens his present
Pain, by thinking of his distant Happiness.
Wherefore (says he) is Light given to him v. 20, &c.
that is in Misery; and Life unto the bitter
in Soul? Which long for Death, but it com-
eth not: And dig for it more than for hid
Treasures? Which rejoice exceedingly; and are
glad when they can find the Grave.

BY

By comparing the foregoing Verses with those that follow, it will appear very plain that *Job* speaks here of himself; and such others as believed a future State, and hope they shall be happy in it. As for himself, he express'd his Sense and Belief of that important Article in the strongest Terms.

Chap. 19.
25, 26,
27.

I know that my Redeemer liveth (says he) and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth: And tho' after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body; yet in my Flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for my self; and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another; tho' my Reins be consumed within me. They who thus hope for Happiness in another Life, may well long for Death: And none but such can Rejoice exceedingly, and be glad when they find the Grave.

THAT I may Discourse on these Words in the most useful Manner,

First, I shall consider how far, and in what Cases, it is allowable to long for Death: Then,

Secondly; I shall show you that 'tis our Duty to make the Thoughts of Death so familiar, that we may meet it not only with Resolution, but with Gladness; Rejoicing
exceed-

exceedingly, and being glad when we can find the Grave. In order to which,

Lastly, I shall lay before you the most effectual way to extinguish the Fear of Death, and make the Thoughts of it easy and pleasant. But,

I. LET us consider how far, and in what Cases it is allowable to long for Death.

Now tho' the Love of Life, (I mean the Love of *this* Life, or the present Scene of Things) be, for very wise Reasons, strongly implanted in our Nature; yet if we attentively reflect on the Inclinations of our Soul, the Tendency of our Affections, with the Force of our Hopes and Fears; we shall find there are Three Cases in which Men can long for Death; to wit, either through a firm Hope, and ardent Desire of future Happiness; or to avoid the Extremity of present Pain; or because of some Disgust they take at the World, arising from the Loss of an imaginary Good, that makes them disrelish Life, and sometimes rush on Death in Rage and Despair.

I. As for the first Case, I think it not only lawful, but necessary to long for Death, if such a Desire flows from the Love
of

of God; and of that infinite Joy we expect in his Presence. How can a Good Man help wishing to see the End of a vain, anxious, uncertain Life; when he has the reasonable Hope of a perfect, happy, unchangeable State in the other World?

IF we love God sincerely, we must endeavour to resemble him in those amiable Perfections we adore: We must desire to see him Face to Face, (as it were) and not darkly as through a Glass, by those Rays of Glory that are reflected from the Creatures. Nay, if we love our selves as we ought to do, we must wish for perfect Happiness; that is, we must long for Death, without which our Happiness can neither be complete, nor secure.

IN several Places we find the Holy Psalmist expressing his fervent Desires, and earnest Longing after God. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* (says he) *there is none upon Earth, that I desire besides thee: My Flesh and my Heart faileth; but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* And in another Place he says, — *As the Heart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God!* My Soul thirsteth for God,

Psal. 73.
25, 26.

Psal. 42.
1, 2.

God, --when shall I come and appear before God! In thy Presence is Fulness of Joy: And at thy Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore. Psal. 16.
11.

St. Paul had so lively a Sense of these Pleasures, and that Joy, that he told the *Philippians*, he thought *Dying* was a Gain to him: And therefore, that tho' for their Sakes, he was willing to live, that he might do Good among them; yet for his own Advantage, he had rather a *Desire to depart*, and to be with Christ, which was far better; infinitely better for him than the happiest State on Earth. Thus far then there is no Difficulty: For a Pious Soul's longing for Death, is the natural and necessary Consequence of his loving God, and desiring to be Happy.

2. AND because our Aversion from Misery is as powerful a Principle of Action, and as natural as our Love of Happiness, one oppress'd with Pain and Anguish may reasonably be allowed to wish for Death, if that can put an end to his Torment: That is, if the Person who is miserable for the present, has any just Hopes of being Happy in a future State. If he has no reason to hope that Death would give him Relief, and

B change

change his State for the better, it must be Madness in him to long for Death: for that were in Effect to wish for Damnation: A Desire equally unnatural, and absurd. A Wicked Man in Pain, cannot but wish it were removed: But this is what Death can never do for him: Therefore at the same time he desires to be happy, (or at least free from Torment,) he must Repent, and Amend, and then he may long for Death as soon, and as heartily, as he will. But if he continues Impenitent, whatever he may fancy, Death will not *extinguish* his Sense of Pain, but increase it. And if he *will* try the Experiment, he will soon throw up his Scepticism, and repent when 'tis too late.

3. THIS is, very near, the Case of those unhappy dejected Souls, who being seized with Grief, after some Loss, or Disappointment, give up themselves entirely to gloomy Thoughts, and sullen Sorrow: So that nothing can serve their Turn but Dying. But alas! are such People fit to die, who are Slaves to the most violent Passions? What can they expect in the other World? Their Affections are misplaced; their Desires, irregular; their Hopes, extravagant;
their

their Sorrow, excessive: And are these Dispositions fit for Heaven; where there is the most perfect Order, and Proportion? Let them learn to *live* first, and grow Wise: Then it will be time enough for them to think of *Death*: At least, it will be soon enough for them to *long* for it.

SOMETIMES it happens that an Indisposition of Body has the same Effect on a Man, as these other Disorders of the Mind; and throw even good People into so deep a Melancholy, that they not only long for Death; but violently seize it. In such a Case, I believe a Man is no more answerable for his Actions, than other mad People: For when he has lost the Use of his Reason, it were hard, nay, unjust, to punish him for not acting according to it. But then 'tis to be feared, that these Melancholy Fits flow too often from a previous Abuse of Reason, some secret Passion that preys upon the Mind; and, by *that*, affects the Body: And then the Man is answerable for the *Causes* of his Disorder; tho' perhaps not for the *Consequences* of it.

UPON the whole; it seems to be very plain, that none ought to *long* for *Death*,

but they who are fit to Die. And seeing the Wicked never are prepared for that great Change, it is not allowable in them to wish for Death; even tho' they suffered under the sharpest Pain of Body, or the deepest Sorrow of Mind: For these fall vastly short of that inconceivable, endless Misery, which Death must bring upon them. And tho' good People are allowed, (I may say, oblig'd,) to long for their Dissolution: Yet such a Desire (whether it arise from the Sense of present Pain, or the Hopes of future Bliss; or both of them,) must be resigned, and submissive to the Will of God; and free from all Anxiety, Murmuring, and Discontent.

BUT indeed there is so little Danger, even of good People's longing anxiously for Death; the best of us are so unwilling to leave *this* World, and so coldly affected towards the *other*; that I judged it necessary for me,

II. In the *Second* Place, to show you that 'tis our Duty to make the Thoughts of Death so familiar to us, that we may be able to meet it, not only with Resolution, but with Pleasure; *Rejoicing exceedingly, and being glad when we find the Grave.*

T H E R E

THERE is something in Death so terrible and shocking to Human Nature, that there are but few who care to think of so disagreeable an Object. And yet seeing we must meet this *King of Terrors* one time or other, 'tis but reasonable we should prepare for the Encounter. Let us therefore take the Courage, but to look upon him sometimes with the Eye of Faith; and we shall find him soon become not *formidable*; and at length appear *friendly*.

'TIS the peculiar Privilege of a true Christian, to despise Death: For tho' this be Magnanimity in him; 'tis Madness for the Wicked to pretend to it. How can they dare to *Die*, who are not fit to *Live*? This is not Fortitude, but Folly and Rashness: 'Tis like the Courage of the unthinking Beast, rather than the Resolution of a wisely Brave and Virtuous Man.

LET it never be said, however, that the Wicked fear Death less than the Righteous. What is there in Nature, that can make a Good Man afraid to die; or give the least Glimpse of Hope to the Vicious? Shall then the very Thoughts of Death frighten us; when the most profligate Wretches

Wretches can meet it Bold and Undaunted? In this Case, I know not whether *their Folly, or ours, be the greatest.*

I Cor.
15. 55.

Heb. 2.
14. 15.

SEEING one of the great Benefits of our Redemption, is our Triumphant over Death, and the Devil; we should exult with St. Paul, and say, *O Death! where is thy Sting! O Grave! where is thy Victory!* Christ, thro' death, hath destroyed him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and hath deliver'd them, who thro' fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage. Seeing the Fear of Death is a Bondage, a Slavery from which Christ came to deliver us; how can we bear such a grievous Yoke? 'Till we shake it off, we can never enjoy Life with half the Freedom, Ease, and Pleasure, that we might have.

AFTER all; what is there in Death, that can make it terrible to a Sincere Christian? (for of such only I now speak :) He firmly believes there is a Future State of Rewards and Punishments after this Life; and he has good Reason to hope, he shall be Happy there: Why then is he afraid of Dying?

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Is it because of the Pain we must then feel? Why, 'tis Life that lengthens the Pain of Sickness: Death puts an end to it; and begins a State of Endless Joy?

ARE we afraid of Death, because it conveys us to a new, unknown, unalterable State? But we should consider, that tho' it be a *new* State, 'tis a Happy one; tho' it be *unknown* to us at present, it will not be long so: And since 'tis *unchangeable*, we should like it so much the better: For our best Dispositions are uncertain, while we live in this World; but in Heaven, they are for ever fix'd on God and Goodness.

ARE we unwilling to lose the Conversation of our Dearest Friends? Why, if it be truly desirable, we may hope to see them in Heaven: And if we do not, there we shall not find any want of them; when we are surrounded with an *innumerable Com-* Heb. 12.
pany of Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect. And how Happy must their Conversation be, where Wisdom is the Entertainment; and all rejoice in mutual Love! Where Harmony is heard, without Discord; Truth is communicated, without wrangling; Goodness is diffused by a Cir-
cling

cling Imitation ; and Happiness is increased, by being common !-----

WHAT is it then ? Are we desirous of Life, that we may grow fitter for Heaven ? The Design is good : But why do we not always put it in Execution ? Why do we not daily improve in Virtue ; and prepare our selves for another World ? After the longest and best spent Life, this humble Excuse will still become us : We shall always have Defects and Failings to amend ; but if we sincerely endeavour to correct them, they will be pardon'd for the Sake of *Jesus Christ*. Let us therefore think often and seriously of Death, and we shall find nothing in it to damp, or discourage us. And if we look on it as the Gate of Glory, as the End of a troublesome Life, and the Beginning of a happy one ; we must meet it not only with Courage, but Delight. If we do not so, 'tis a Sign that our Love to God is not so sincere, nor our Zeal so fervent, nor our Faith so steddy, nor our Hope so well grounded, as they ought to be.

THIS, I'm afraid, is the true Reason, why so many People, that seem to be very earnest

earnest and diligent in the Practice of Religion, are yet unwilling to die. I propos'd therefore,

III. IN the *Third* Place, to show you the most effectual way of extinguishing the Fear of Death.

Now in order to this, we must view Death in that agreeable Light, wherein Revelation has set it. We are no longer left to our uncertain Thoughts and Guessees about a Future State : *Life and Immortality* ^{2 Tim. 1 10.} are now *brought to Light by the Gospel*. So that by *Faith* we may *all* be assured, (as *some* are from *Reason*,) that tho' Death destroys the Body, it does not put an End to our Being ; but we shall think, perceive, remember, and judge, and desire ; we shall love, or hate, fear, or hope, and feel Pain, or Pleasure, after Death, as certainly (and far more perfectly,) as we do now : *For the Spirit returns to God who gave it*, says *Solomon*. ^{Eccl. 12. 7.} And a Wiser Person than he, tells ^{Mat. 10. 28.} us, that we should *not fear them that kill the Body, and cannot kill the Soul* ; but rather ^{Luk. 12. 5.} *fear Him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell*. Seeing the Soul survives the Body then ; *when we are absent* ^{2 Cor. 5. 6.} *from*

from the Body, we may be present with the Lord. For, as it is appointed for all Men once to die ; so after that is the Judgment :
 Acts 17. 31. God having appointed a Day , in which he will judge the World in Righteousness ; and
 Mat. 16. reward every Man according to his Works :
 Ch. 25. 46. So that the Wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment ; but the Righteous into Life Eternal.

THEY, who really believe these Great and Necessary Truths, must own, that Death is not to be feared on its own Account, but because of its Consequences ; those severe and terrible Punishments, the Wicked must for ever endure. But now Death is not the Cause of that Misery : Our wicked Lives expose us to it. We ought therefore to be afraid of Living ill ; and that would strip Death of all its gloomy Terrors.

LET US but fear God, and keep his Commandments ; and we shall need to fear nothing besides. For then I'm perswaded, that
 Eccl. 12. 13. neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come ; nor height, nor depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate
 Rom. 8. 38. rate

rate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors, thro' him that loved us. v. 37.

To die with Ease and Comfort then, we must live with a good Conscience ; in the sincere and constant Practice of all Virtue and Goodness. For, the mere Belief of a Future State, will rather increase our Fears, than remove them ; if we do not show the Sincerity of our Faith by our Works, and heartily endeavour to do whatever we know to be our Duty.

BUT in order to this, we ought to *die daily* in a manner, by carrying the Thoughts of Death about us ; that so we may insensibly wean our Affections from the World ; and being at least *dead unto Sin*, may live *unto Righteousness*. 1 Pet. 2. 24. Tho' such a serious and recollected Frame of Spirit, will sometimes check our vain and foolish Mirth ; yet it turns our Attention on such Glorious Objects, as best deserve it ; such as yield tis an inward, pure, and satisfying Joy, which none can know but they who feel it.

FOR, *having Peace with God*, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, we rejoice in the hope of Rom. 5. 1, 2.

- 1 Pet. 1. 8. *the Glory of God ; with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. For we know, that if our*
 2 Cor. 5. 1. *earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Hea-*
 Rev. 21. 4. *vens : Where there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying ; but they that be*
 Dan. 12. 3. *wise, shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and receive a Crown of Glory that*
 1 Pet. 5. 4. *fadeth not away.*

METHINKS such Glorious Hopes, should raise our Thoughts above the little Concerns of this Life ; and make us think of Death, not only without Terror, not merely with Tranquility, but with the utmost Joy and Triumph.

THAT this is practicable, we have no Reason to doubt : For of late we had a very convincing Instance of it, in the Behaviour of our Deceased Friend, Mr. EDWARD BULKELY ; who died with as little Fear, and as much Satisfaction, as any one I ever knew.

I'm very sensible how difficult it is, to speak of the Dead in such a manner, as not to offend the Living. The Censorious too often make the greatest Part of an Audi-

Audience ; and with them all Commendation is *Flattery*, when it is not bestow'd on themselves. For their Sakes therefore, (lest there should happen to be any such here,) I shall say less than I ought ; tho' perhaps more than they will be pleased with. However, I hope, I shall try no body's Patience, but theirs.

I MIGHT indeed be fairly excused from entering upon the Character of the Deceased, which some of you are better acquainted with than I am : For, I have already done what he designed I shou'd, by recommending a Holy Life, as the only Means to live with Pleasure, and die in Peace. He who both Living, and Dying, avoided all Pomp and Ostentation, cou'd not design this Discourse for his own Praise, but for our Instruction. He had higher Views than a little popular Applause ; And if he cou'd set any Value upon it, he had as much as he cou'd desire : For, his Profession gave him daily Opportunities of being Serviceable : His Humanity made him forward to embrace them : And his Skill (attained by great Experience, and equal Learning;) crown'd his Endeavours with uncommon Success.

THO'

THO' his Inclination led him to Retirement and Study; he show'd himself no less fit for Action and Business, when he was called to it. In his private Station he was humble and obliging, ever ready to Advise and Assist the Distressed: And while he had a Publick Character, it was adorn'd with Candor, Diligence and Fidelity.

So soon as his Health began to yield to Age, and Accidents, he left the World, in Effect; and betook himself to his admired Solitude; which he employ'd like a Philosopher, and a Christian; in the Study of Nature, and the Contemplation of Death. This made the Thoughts of it so Easy and Familiar to him, that he talk'd of it with the same Indifference he did of other Things: But it may be questioned, whether it was indifferent to him to Live, or to Die: For having acted his Part in the several Scenes of Life, he thought it but decent for him to withdraw: For he measured Life by its Usefulness, not by its Length; and reckoned it below an Ingenuous Mind to value Life, any longer than it was Beneficial to others.

THESE

THESE Views reconciled him entirely to Death; which he look'd on only as a changing the Scene of Thought and Action, and a taking Leave of his Friends, for a while; that he might go to his *Heavenly Country*.

HE waited, I believe he longed, for Death: Not through *Discontent*; for no Man cou'd be more resigned to th' Almighty's Will, both as to the Time, and the Manner, of his Departure: Nor through *Melancholy*; for he was as cheerful as he cou'd be, amidst sharp returning Pains, and a lingering Distemper; which he bore, (tho' not with the Patience of a Stoick, yet) with the Temper of a Christian.

WHEN he had waited long for Death, because it came not, he digged for it, more than for hid Treasures. His hidden Treasure was his *Grave*, which he look'd after with as much Care and Complacency, as the Miser does after his beloved Mammon. For indeed Death seem'd to be his Delight, and the Grave, his Glory.

WE cannot wonder then, that he who had so just a Sense, both of Life, and Death, Rejoiced exceedingly, and was glad when
Death

Death approached. He was the only Person, I dare say, that did Rejoice at it: For every one that knew him lost a Friend; who wish'd well to all the World; and took all proper Occasions to show it.

To conclude: I think the least that Envy it self can allow, is, that he had several Qualities we ought to Praise; One, that we must admire; but few we can find fault with; and none to be severely censured. Let us therefore imitate in him what we cannot but approve: And if our Life be as Useful and Upright as his was, we shall have the same Reason to Rejoice exceedingly, and be glad when we can find the Grave.

Therefore, my Beloved Brethren, be ye more Stedfast, Unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord: Forasmuch as ye know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord. To whom, &c.



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